MORE OF "THE BIG CHANCE".

CAMERON SISTERS in "LITTLE SIMPLICITY" at the ASTOR THEATRE

TRANT MORRIS, author of the original version of "The Big Chance," which seems thus far to have been one of the season's distinct successes, when visited at his office in Baltimore by a representative of THE SUN had the following to say about the play:

"Play writing is a funny game. When you think you are through you find or somebody else finds you have just begun. Upon my return from France in the early summer I had the manuscript submitted to Mr. Woods and he bought it at once. I told him very frankly, however, that after a six months absence I would be so infernally busy with my own affairs it would be impossible for me to attend rehearsals or do much more to the play. Mr. Woods kindly relieved me of this and brought in Willard Mack. It is scarcely necessary here for me to give all the credit to Mr. Mack to which he is due. I say in all sincerity he is due the very highest credit, but Mr. Mack, being an actor and playwright himself, has seen to it himself that the credit due was not omitted.

"I say this in the best of nature, for Mr. Mack and I are the best of friends and naturally very happy over the success of the play. I don't suppose any two minds ever did work just the same way, and that of course always makes for some difficulty in collaboration or in revision. I think the characters of the remittance man and the tough have been but slightly changed, and the role played by Mary Nash so splendidly has been altered only to the extent of starting her off on a little higher plane. I purposely put her on a considerably lower plane in the first act in order to get the contrast by showing the successive stages by which she was pulled up and regenerated. As the play now stands she is practically the same girl in the second act she was in the first, on which point I may say I good naturedly disagree with Mr. Mack.

"As to the third man, the aviator, there Mr. Mack's changes are a source of regret to me. As the character now stands and as several writers in New York papers have observed it is very blurred. In looking back on the play I think most every one will agree that despite Ramsay Wallace's art no very distinctive impression of the character remains. In my version the character of the aviator was etched very clearly, if I may be allowed to say it without seeming egotistical. In the first and second acts, which are the only two in which he has ever appeared, I think he stood out in quite bold relief, and I do not think that there was any blur to the characterization. In the first act emphasis was laid on his daredeviltry and his carelessness with life and his warm heartedness. As he now stands, I confess I cannot quite make him out. He is like a child who has outgrown his parents' understanding.

"As originally written the tough, played by Mr. Meehan, was the son of *Mrs. Malloy*. Mr. Mack thought it wiser to sever this relationship. He was probably right, but in so doing a big, vital point which was a striking part of the theme of the play was sacrificed. *Mrs. Malloy* now is a generous, whole hearted somebody, but really she does not fit into the theme. When, however, in the original version I had her the mother of the tough and he returned home in the third act in his uniform head up you could see in her face for the first time in her life pride, and righteous pride, in her boy. In the first two acts she considered him a pretty worthless skunk, and a big, vital point was lost when the regenerative influence upon this old woman through the thought that her son had made good was eliminated.

"In other words, not only did I have in mind the regeneration of the wastrels and the girl but also the lifting up of the commonplace mothers of the country who for the first time in their lives have been given a chance to exult and know the feeling of real pride in the accomplishment of their hitherto useless offspring. I had in mind something of the spirit of Barrie's 'Old Lady With the Medals.' Of course all this was sacrificed when the relationship was severed between the tough and *Mrs. Malloy*. As it was an integral part of the theme as showing the regenerative influence of the war as applied to the commonplace mothers of commonplace children I felt it vital to the theme!

"In the best of nature and with the kindest feeling to Mr. Woods and Mr. Mack, I will never understand until the dawn of the new time just what was accomplished by one change made in the last act. The character of the girl's lover was created as a weak, spineless jellyfish. It never was in him to do anything because he lacked moral fibre. I made him consistent to the end. He turned yellow at the last minute when they were about to go over the top and came back to the Colonel's dugout, pleading with the Colonel to save him. As a deserter the Colonel could do nothing and ordered him to get back quick. He started back in terror and his career was mercilessly ended by a stray German shell.

"The tough went out and brought him in, and as the boy cursed the Germans the tough said to him: 'Don't cuss 'em, kid, it was the kindest way they could a handed it to you. I only hope they'll be that kind to me when my turn comes.' The weakling then 'went west,' as they say over there.

"In order to conceal the truth from the girl, the Colonel, who has talked of his Victoria Cross in the preceding two acts and who has just that day received it but who has kept the knowledge from the girl, wishing to surprise her with it, takes off his V. C., crosses to the side of the boy and pins it on his breast. It is the supreme sacrifice of the play. The girl comes and sees the Victoria Cross and imagines that the boy died as a soldier should die. The Colonel tells her that they had all kept it a secret as a great surprise for her and unfortunately she learned it too late.

"Why this scene was changed, as I say, I will never know. Mr. Mack claimed it could not be done, but I heard of numerous instances in France where dying soldiers gave away their medals to friends, having no one back in Blighty to leave them to, and certainly it was not stretching that old hackneyed phrase 'dramatic license' too far considering the greatness of the sacrifice involved and the logical ending it brought.

"But I do not want any of the foregoing to be considered as criticism, for, as I say, Mr. Mack and I are both too well pleased with the result. Mr. Mack added to the play in many ways, for which he has my warmest thanks, and I am sure nothing said here can be construed as criticism, but as merely a little chatty discussion of differences of opinion. I suppose whenever a play is written and a collaborator comes in after the fact instead of before the finish of the play such things are likely to happen. As every one knows the character as originally written was for an English remittance man, but at the last minute, Cyril Keightley retiring from the cast, it became necessary for Mr. Mack to take the role and play it as an Irishman rather than an Englishman. Certainly in this role Mr. Mack has given one of the best interpretations in his career."

AT THE HIPPODROME.

A new feature for Thanksgiving week at the Hippodrome will be a ten minute version of "H. M. S. Pinafore," with De Wolf Hopper as *Sir Joseph Porter*. Belle Story will appear as *Josephine;* Charles Geary as *Ralph Rackstraw;* J. Parker Coombs as *Dick Deadeye;* Vera Bailey as *Buttercup;* Albert Froom as *Capt. Corcoran*, and Jeanne Mai as *Hebe*. Notwithstanding the interpolation of this unique attraction for the holidays the announcement is emphasized that all the other elaborate scenes will be retained.

WARFIELD IS TRUE TO OLD LOVES.

In another version of "The Auctioneer," which opened a four weeks engagement at the Manhattan Opera House last Monday evening, David Warfield comes back to a characterization which he has offered the American public more than one thousand times.

Answering a question concerning his continuance in his established successes Mr. Warfield expressed only happiness that Mr. Belasco had decided to give the public another visit from *Simon Levi* this season.

"The public wants me in 'The Music Master' and 'The Auctioneer,'" he said, "just as it wanted Joe Jefferson in 'Rip Van Winkle.' 'The Music Master' I have played more than two thousand times, 'The Auctioneer' over a thousand. During this long period of numerous revivals of these productions of Mr. Belasco's I have had ample opportunity to observe the attitude of the world toward them.

"I stood one night last winter in the lobby of a theatre in which I was playing 'The Music Master,' watching the eager throng of people fill the playhouse. An old lady came into the gallery entrance. She was lame and feeble and white haired. Even with the assistance I added to that already given her by loved ones she climbed the stairs with difficulty. Yet she had come to see my 'Music Master'!

"At another performance I stood aside to let a group of school girls pass," Mr. Warfield continued. "Later, when the play was over, I told a newspaper man that those were my two greatest reasons for playing 'The Music Master' and 'The Auctioneer,' the undying love and appreciation of the old; the faith and enthusiasm of the young.

"More than 3,000 times I have appeared in these two characters, and the public has never tired of them. I have known folk to see them both over and over again. It's because of this wonderful appreciation that I am glad to have *Simon Levi*, the auctioneer, pay my loyal supporters a visit this year. I am sure it's because he's so quaint and human that he is so beloved," Mr. Warfield added meditatively.

"I want my public to know," Mr. Warfield went on to say, "that I neither played 'The Music Master' last year nor am playing 'The Auctioneer' again this season for the mere purpose of making money. I had an offer from a moving picture firm of $1,000,000 for a year's work, and I refused it. It is certainly more than I could earn in any play of the speaking stage in the same length of time. But it does not matter. I do not need the money enough to ever sell my privilege of seeing elderly ladies climb to

FLORENCE ENRIGHT in "NOTHING BUT LIES"

the gallery to see a beloved character impersonated by me, no matter what the amount offered me in exchange.

"Not that Mr. Belasco will produce no new plays for me. Undoubtedly he will. But the new plays will never prevent my reverting every now and then to 'The Music Master' and 'The Auctioneer,' characters so dear to my public and so beloved by me," he ended loyally.

ROLAND WEST'S TWO KINDS OF NEWNESS.

Every season brings its list of new authors. But it is a rare occurrence when a new author happens to be a new producer as well. Such a distinction is a feature of the present theatrical year and concerns Roland West, author and producer of "The Unknown Purple" at the Lyric Theatre.

Only a little while ago West was an actor, appearing in vaudeville at the head of his own company in sketches from his own pen. West saved his vaudeville earnings. He had an ambition. He wanted to do big things on Broadway and alone be responsible for his rise and fall. All of which required an extensive bankroll.

He kept on with his vaudeville career, winning success here as in other cities and adding to his revenue from time to time by directing motion picture productions. But to gain a really substantial financial success West knew he must write a play that would have universal appeal and then stake all his earnings on its production.

West appreciated Broadway's philosophy of welcoming heartily the new and novel. He would turn out a novelty that would startle Broadway. He had had an idea for years—an idea based upon an invisible man for a hero. He would place this hero in logical situations, build up the action on a logical premise and, intermingling sentiment, comedy and tense drama, present an attraction which might place him among the financially independent.

He set to work, making his hero a struggling, simple inventor who was attempting to crystallize a purple ray. To bring about the achievement of the hero's aims he would base the drama upon the motive of revenge. Calling in his friend Carlyle Moore as a collaborator he showed his scientist hero as a man betrayed by his wife and best friend, suffering a long term in prison for the crime of another and there, under the inspiration of a misanthrope, planning the revenge which will make him happy again and restore his chaotic world to order.

Thus "The Unknown Purple" had its origin. Produced in Long Branch in midsummer, it outdrew all rival attractions and created considerable discussion. It moved on to Washington and Atlantic City, where it duplicated its Long Branch success. People who attended the play were excited by its novel mystery, and there was a general prediction that New York would respond with a year's engagement.

HOW FRISCO WON HIS PLACE.

FRISCO, exponent of super-jazz dancing and the most famous product of the Barbary Coast School of Terpsichore, has arrived. After a hard road over which he has stepped with persistent gaminerie and grotesquerie, he and his partner, Loretta McDermott, a Chicago product, are headliners at the Keith theatres. Frisco never saw the Barbary Coast, yet every habitue of that picturesque outlaw land who has seen him declares that he is the incarnation, the essential spirit, the living, breathing, dancing expression, of the place. That's why George Lewis of Dubuque, Ia., is nationally famous as Frisco. The name is so pat that no one, not even his kinsfolk, ever dream of calling him anything else. He is Frisco—the quaint physical expression of a place and a period. "They give me the m-m-m-monaker and it st-st-st-stuck," stutters the dancer in telling his story, "but I wasn't really ever in any B-B-B-Barbary Coast d-d-d-dump."

When Frisco was talking salary with the booking powers of the Palace he casually mentioned that he was under considerable expense for his "heaters."

"What do you mean by 'heaters'?" asked a vaudeville man.

"My c-c-c-cigars; I smoke about thirty-five a day," Frisco explained. And so it became known that the smokes out of which he extracts so much comedy are to him "heaters."

Frisco has been doing his original style of dancing for a long time—a good many years, in fact; he has been away ahead of the times until the

BETH MARTIN in "LIGHTNIN'"

present when the public has taken to jazz music and all that goes with it, and the steps of Frisco are the ultimate expression of the delirium tremens of syncopation. Frisco has always been popular in the underworld, where they have had ragtime and jazz and strange delirious dances for two generations. He saw the dancing of the dumps modified into the syncopated steps and the parlor prancing that ruled during what was known as "the modern dancing craze"; but he refused to tone down or soften his expression of the weird, wild music that appealed so potently to the folk of the carefree resorts where respectability was shed like a garment. Frisco stood by his art. Rather than bend the knee or shake the foot in conformity to current polite usage of the theatre he "busked" in lowly resorts, meaning that he appeared before nondescript audiences in cabarets and concert saloons and danced for whatever the spectators might throw to him. Nightly he harvested from the dance floor thin dimes and more obese pieces of silver, and sometimes a "paper," as he termed a greenback. Off and on he subdued himself to chorus work and buried in the ensemble appeared in "The Chocolate Soldier" and "A Modern Eve." His story of his experiences as a Bulgarian military man in "The Chocolate Soldier" is one of the classics of chrusdom.

One day he met a shapely child in her teens dancing in a Chicago resort, and after watching her lawless rhythms decided that here was a partner after his own heart who knew intuitively how to express in the dance the latent savagery of rag and jazz. They worked together at Colosimo's and then, hearing that in the underworld of New Orleans there was a ripe and sophisticated appreciation of their style of dancing, they went to the Mississippi town and danced before genuine jazz bands, which gave their blood a paprika and jungle tingle. They went to Mobile and danced there. Thence the road led to Chicago and on to New York. The famous Jazz Band on Frisco's say so followed them to Chicago and set that town wild over syncopated lawlessness. As the rhythms grew wilder and the beats more complicated the call of the wild men and the wild women was for madder music and for stronger steps, and behold Frisco emerged from the underworld with Loretta McDermott and was the craze of the hour. Vernon Castle saw him, and seeking him out said:

"Frisco, you have what they really want. This modern dancing has been playing at the real thing. They are tired of polite ballroom dancing and the Barbary Coast perfumed and emasculated. Go to New York and be there when this jazz stuff hits Broadway."

Frisco came to New York and so did Loretta McDermott. For a time they danced in cabarets and cafes, the mad call of the jazz being slow in hitting up the pulses of jaded New York. One night they went on in an almost show at the Fulton Theatre and the house cheered them. Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., ever hawklike in his search for the new and the excellent, immediately engaged Frisco for the "Midnight Frolic" and "The Follies." Loretta McDermott went to the Century Roof in imitations of her partner. Both registered successes and flowers and large incomes. Jazz now flooded the dance places; the parlor hoofers fell back into the boudoir and into the white light of the incandescents strode Frisco and Loretta, bravely doing the red blooded hirsute Pan-Venus steps that had been kept so long beyond the frontiers of respectability. It was the real thing at last and the dances that came from the jungle and outgrew tomtom melodies and crept up the sleeves from New Orleans to Chicago and over the overland route from the Barbary Coast came into their own with a whoop and boom, boom, boom that would gladden the heart of a witch doctor beating on a tin gong with a human thigh bone. All the world took up jazz dancing and hearkened to jazz music. London has just caught the epidemic and the mortality is even greater than over here.

Keith meanwhile has caught Frisco and Loretta McDermott and tied them up with contracts and made them headliners. Their troubles are over, for fortune is theirs, and high place, and the Barbary Coast via Frisco is the real, real thing in the dance places of the most socially high.

LOUISE CARTER in "DIFFERENCE in GODS"

THE "PEP" IN "EVERYTHING."

With "Everything" entering on the fourth month of its run at the Hippodrome, R. H. Burnside, the general stage director of that institution, can sit back and take a long breath after the gigantic task of staging the huge superspectacle. He can sit back. But everybody associated with the indefatigable stage director, with his dry wit and his friendly smile and his eye that never misses anything, knows that he won't. For a "Hip" show is never done. And from opening night in August until the curtain goes down in May Mr. Burnside is at work to see that there is never a dull moment.

Vigilance, according to this wizard of pageantry, is the sole secret of the success of all spectacular productions. Weed out the story, throw away the plot, but gather together "pep" and more "pep." The spirit of youth must be there and splashes of gorgeous color in costume and scenery. There must be the sort of music which crashes its way into your inner consciousness and sends you away whistling in spite of yourself, and there must be continuous comedy, so that one laugh trips on the heels of another.

It is that ruthless hunt of the dull moment which makes the summer long rehearsal of the "Hip" show such a tremendous time. Mr. Burnside has it all figured out on a mathematical basis—one poor line kills six good ones, just as it takes six good seasons to erase the unfavorable effect of one bad one. He judges when a scene needs cutting by watching the onlookers, not the performers. A yawn frequently cuts a dialogue in half, while a restless twitching may amputate an entire scene. Sustained interest, which is more or less sought in highbrow literary circles, is worshipped as a god by the producer of the spectacular play. The latter must be built up step by step and the culmination must be a smashing punch which gathers all the previous glories of the show into one last sensation and sends the audience away with a thrill.

HURRY UP SONG HITS.

Hints concerning the vast sums such men as Irving Berlin and John Golden annually pay as income tax are periodically responsible for the release of new floods of song scripts from amateur melody fashioners and rhyme manipulators. The hard working pianist of the Gem Motion Picture Palace of Wayback, Kan., reads that George Cohan's latest effusion, of which more than 'steen hundred thousand copies already have been sold and which in less than three months has returned its author more than $36,000 in royalties, was written during the time required for Mr. Cohan to travel in a depositor's line from the door to the receiving teller's window in a bank.

He has heard somewhere that "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was conceived and composed while Mr. Berlin in his earlier career in an East Side cafe was waiting for a customer's order. Logically he concludes that the production of a song that will follow in the footsteps of every victrola salesman from Kamchatka to Karnak is simply a matter of luck. He discounts the almost uncanny faculty some men have of striking exactly the right chord to which a theatre or other audience will respond.

There have been few more popular songs than "Good-by, Girls; I'm Through." It was a feature of Charles Dillingham's production of "Chin Chin" and has been sung and whistled in every part of the world. It was written by John Golden, who sat with Mr. Dillingham watching a rehearsal of the show. At a point where a change of scene was required the producer voiced the opinion that a song was needed as a connecting link between the two periods of the entertainment. As the original score contained no song suitable for the particular situation Mr. Golden offered his services. He left the theatre to return in half an hour with both the words and music of "Good-by, Girls!" which was immediately incorporated in the performance.

Another such instance occurred during the preparation of "The Canary," Mr. Dillingham's most recent success at the Globe Theatre. Irving Berlin was the magic worker in this case. In the second act Joseph Cawthorn and Maude Eburne play a comedy scene, the success of which was foreshadowed from its first private performance. But Mr. Dillingham decided that it required a song as a climax. Miss Eburne was a character actress who had never before appeared in musical comedy and no one had thought of her as a singing comedienne. But this meant nothing to Mr. Dillingham. Telephones were started after Irving Berlin. He was located at dinner in a hotel near the Globe Theatre. Mr. Dillingham made known his immediate requirement.

"All right," answered Mr. Berlin. "But when do you want this song?"

"It is 7:30 now," replied the producer. "I must have it by 10 o'clock. We want to rehearse it to-night."

"Wow!" said Mr. Berlin, "I'll have to cut my dessert."

At 10 o'clock Mr. Berlin walked into the Globe Theatre with the words and music of "You're So Beautiful" under his arm. A New York audience heard it a few nights later and it is an established hit.

Brooklyn Vaudeville.

Sharing chief honors at the Orpheum will be Helen Ware in "The Eternal Barrier," and Frisco in Jazz dances. Other acts will be Eddie Leonard, Ruth Roye, Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Barrie and Joe Laurie and Aileen Bronson.

Chic Sale and the Watson Sisters are specially featured at the Bushwick, where the bill includes Valeria Bergere, Harry Carroll, Jack Wyatt with Scotch singers and dancers, and the J. C. Mack Trio in "Mother's Boy."

The Broadway Belles Company offers to burlesque patrons two "burlettas" at the Star.